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HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST TIMOR

● Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, since the 1975 invasion and occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian military, as many as 200,000 of a population of 650,000 East Timorese men, women, and children have perished. As William Buckley wrote in the National Review last May, "It is worthy of comparison with Pol Pot's bloody reign over Cambodia, not only for the devastation inflicted, but also for the lack of attention, in the world community, paid to the holocausts." For those of us concerned about international human rights, the repression and brutality carried out in East Timor since 1975 stands out as one of the great crimes of our time.

When we talk about 200,000 people, three men seem almost trivial. But they are not, Mr. President. Today I bring to the attention of my colleagues the troubling case of three East Timorese law students who were recently arrested in Jakarta. They are the subjects of two Amnesty International "Urgent Actions," and they may represent an entirely new dimension of Indonesia's disregard for East Timor and its population at a time when the situation on the small island seemed to be improving.

Antonino Goncalves, Joao Freitas de Camara, and Francisco Fernandes Carvalho have all been arrested by the Indonesian military in Jakarta during the past several weeks. Since the arrests, the Indonesian authorities have refused to reveal information about where these students are being held. The Indonesian Government recently informed United States Embassy officials that the students were charged with stockpiling guns in their homes in the East Timor town of East Timor, but details of the charges have yet to be released. Amnesty International is concerned that these men may be the victims of torture, as have many East Timorese in the past.

These arrests and the potential of torture are troubling, and I have made my concerns known to the Government of Indonesia. But there is more. Although the East Timorese have endured incredible hardships and mysterious arrests at the hands of the military in their native land, rarely if ever have there been reports of such arrests outside East Timor. Now we have witnessed three such arrests in several weeks.

Mr. President, being straightforward with Indonesian officials about our concern for the many thousands of East Timorese who continue to be denied even the most basic human rights can only serve to strengthen our relationship with that nation of great strategic interest to us. Being straightforward with Indonesian authorities about our concern for these students can only serve to help them and stem what could be a most dangerous tide before it threatens an entire population and endangers Indonesia's ties with the United States as well.●